

DAVE BOOBS, THEN WANDERERS SNAP BACK

By STUART EARP: Wycombe Wanderers 2, Enfield 1

AFTER handing Enfield a goal on a plate in the first 60 seconds of the match by courtesy of goalkeeper Dave Bullock, Wycombe Wanderers stormed back to capture three extremely useful Rothmans Isthmian League points on Saturday.

Goalkeeper Dave Bullock is no mistake. The Blues regular centre half was forced to wear the 'keeper's jersey on Saturday as John Maskell went down with 'flu earlier in the day. Second choice Dave Wright was on County duty for the Berks and Bucks at Chesham and although Wycombe tried to get him back for the game, they were too late.

Bullock therefore was the man who had to take over between the posts and after only 45 seconds of the match, the choice looked disastrous! Enfield began their very first attack of the game with Eddie Sedgewick sending over a long cross into the box. There seemed to be no danger as Bullock gathered the ball expertly.

But then, he tried to roll the ball in front of him and didn't spot John Connell lurking nearby. The diminutive Enfield frontrunner, nipped in, dispossessed the 'keeper and slipped the ball to John Butterfield who clipped it home gracefully.

With such a shocking start behind them in only the first minute of the game, many sides would have thrown in the towel there and then. Not Wycombe, their answer was quick and deadly. Within seven minutes they were back on level terms thanks to Keith Searle and Mick Holfield.

Dave Yerby, Enfield's only success on the day, went up for a high ball but only succeeded in knocking it back towards the by-line. It seemed a corner all the way but Searle had other ideas

and reached the ball alone before it crossed the line. Goalkeeper Ian Wolstenholme spotted the danger too late and was left stranded on the edge of his box when Searle curled over a superb cross. Holfield, although faced with two defenders, managed to bundle the ball into the back of the net.

The final scoreline belies Wycombe's overall supremacy. Until the final 15 minutes when it seemed Enfield might come back and snatch a late and undeserved equaliser, they dominated the game and treated the large crowd to some excellent attacking football.

Admittedly they were helped by an injury to that excellent centre back Keith Mead, who was hobbling for much of the match after a collision with goalkeeper Ian Wolstenholme. His duel with Searle, such a key factor in this game as it was in the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup final against Slough last term, was soon over, Keith laying on the second goal in great style in the second half.

Another factor in Wycombe's favour was the form of Enfield 'keeper Wolstenholme, who chose this day to turn in one of his worst performances for many a season. Opting to punch the ball instead of catching, he was in terrible trouble every

time the ball was crossed into the area, putting extra stress on his defence from the word 'go'.

Mead's injury and the form of Wolstenholme undoubtedly helped Wycombe, but the real truth is that the Blues were by far the better side overall. They looked more solid at the back after a nervous start, dominated midfield thanks to the improving Tony Brothers and Larry Pritchard, and looked streets ahead of Enfield in attack for speed and ability.

Manager Tommy Lawrence had no less than six of his successful Slough team which reached Wembley in the Amateur Cup last season, at Loakes Park on Saturday. And it was painfully obvious that he needs some new blood. Alf D'Arcy, now 38, was often caught for speed while there was no penetration in his front line. It seems the days of Lawrence's instant success are over for a while.

Dave Bullock, despite his mistake, turned in a more than useful performance in goal. His normal position when a youngster, Dave was never seriously pressed but his massive goalkeeping was an unexpected bonus for Wycombe. Blasting the ball deep into Enfield territory, the visitors defence were under pressure immediately

as the leaping Searle and Perrin laid the ball off menacingly.

Rob Williams took over at centre back in Bullock's absence with Paul Birdseye coming back into the side at full back. Williams, although starting clumsily, put in his usual 100 per cent while Phil Wood was as reliable as ever.

The big success story though, was in midfield. Brothers, enjoying his longest run in the team this season, is now fully taking his chance. Perhaps his shooting needs brushing up a little, but the distribution is excellent. Mick Holfield too enjoyed his best 90 minutes for some time, using his exciting speed to the full.

Man of the match, though, must be Keith Searle. The centre forward now seems to be at his peak and must be one of the most dangerous strikers in amateur football at the moment. When not scoring himself, he is prowling and searching for openings or laying the ball off. On Saturday, he made both goals and looked just as much at home on the wing as in the middle.

After Mead was injured after colliding with his goalkeeper in the 25th minute, Enfield's troubles began. It was at this stage that Searle really turned on

some fine football. In the 29th minute he flashed a header just over the top following a corner from Holfield and then the latter raced through, beating three defenders for speed, but curled his shot too wide of the far post.

In the 38th minute Tony Horseman all but put Wycombe ahead after a strong run by Steve Perrin. Wolstenholme was drawn out of his charge again and Perrin's cross eluded him, sailing straight to Horseman. "Bodger", however, couldn't quite get control and it bobbled up and struck the crossbar.

A minute later, it seemed Searle had scored the second goal when Wolstenholme dropped Holfield's fine cross. The ball bounced in front of the centre forward, who chested it down and rammed it between two defenders. The referee, however, declared Searle had handled the ball and disallowed the effort.

The 1-1 scoreline remained until half-time although Enfield did not go without some more anxious moments before the break.

But in the 53rd minute Wycombe deservedly went ahead. Again Searle provided the scoring pass for Horseman to finish with a perfect header.

There seemed no way Searle could get the ball around Mead, who was shadowing him near the corner flag. The centre forward, however, managed to curl the ball across. Wolstenholme came out again, missed, and gave Horseman the chance to nod the ball crisply into the back of the net.

Soon afterwards, Dave Bullock gave his colleagues another anxious moment when a long ball almost bounced over his arms, but he was able to gather at the second attempt. Then, at the other end, Roger Grant almost surprised the Enfield 'keeper with a free kick, aimed for the top corner of the net, but Wolstenholme just managed to tip the shot over the crossbar.

With Enfield throwing the ball away with poor passing in midfield, Wycombe continued to dictate until the last 15 minutes when they went off the boil. Darling replaced Yerby and Dylan Evans came on for Horseman, but although Enfield came forward at this late stage, they seldom looked like breaking through.

There was just one scare in the very last minute when Enfield could have scored to make the result a travesty. Wanderers gave away a couple of free kicks, the second which found Darling dangerously unmarked. His header, however, was too weak and flew straight into the arms of Bullock.

WYCOMBE: D. Bullock, P. Birdseye, P. Wood, R. Williams, R. Grant, A. Brothers, L. Pritchard, M. Holfield, A. Horseman (sub D. Evans 78 mins), K. Searle, S. Perrin.

ENFIELD: I. Wolstenholme, G. Sedgley, A. D'Arcy, K. Mead, R. Eaton, Yerby (sub M. Darling 75 mins), R. Day, M. O'Sullivan, E. Seidgley, J. Butterfield, J. Connell.

Half-time 1-1. Goalscorers: Wycombe * Holfield (8), Horseman (53). Enfield - Butterfield (1).

Actual paying attendance: 1,717. **Total approximate attendance:** 2,250.